

world's population cannot continue. The extraordinary increase in the standard of living which has characterized the last few decades must quickly be brought to a standstill or be determined by the destructive forces of human extravagance. Very soon, the world politic will have to face the question whether it is better that there should be larger numbers and more modest living, or fewer numbers and lavish living; whether world morality should aim at the enjoyment of life by a great multitude or aim at the restriction of life experience to a few, that they may live in relative opulence."

The shadow of the world's future is the menace of over-population. In a short compass, but with admirable lucidity, the author touches upon subjects such as the distribution of the world's population, man's agricultural, forestal, and animal needs, the world's mineral needs, international economics and migration, and world population and nationalism.

This book will serve as an excellent introduction to the problem of world population, and it is to be hoped that it will have a wide influence in the southern hemisphere where in this problem has not yet become acute in its quantitative aspect, and where it is more capable of intelligent regulation than in the older continents of Europe and Asia. It is gratifying to note that Sir George Knibbs welcomes the world population conference, which took place at Geneva in 1927, and has carefully studied its *Proceedings*; and it is still more gratifying to know that the author ranges himself with that element of the conference which regarded the problem of world population as one that must be solved by eugenic methods.

C. P. BLACKER.

MENTAL DISEASE

Board of Control. *Fourteenth Annual Report for the Year 1927.* London, 1928. Stationery Office. Part 1. 1s. 9d., Part 2. 9s.

THIS is an exceedingly interesting document. Apart from the usual statistical matter and the formal report presented,

there is matter of wide interest for all concerned in mental welfare.

Eugenists will congratulate themselves and the Commissioners on the appearance, in this report, of much material that can only be regarded as eugenic in character. The study of mental disorder must inevitably lead in this direction, with the result that the Commissioners in lunacy must find themselves, without any distinct leanings towards eugenics, thinking on parallel lines with those who study eugenics. Hence the character of such reports as this must continually converge towards eugenic ideals.

The Commissioners lay special emphasis upon the lack of accommodation for cases both of mental disorder and of mental deficiency, and call attention to the serious social consequences that ensue. A large part of the Report is concerned with this subject. The Commissioners "feel bound to emphasize the seriousness of this shortage, because . . . it is essential that it should be borne in mind that lunacy and mental deficiency are merely different aspects of what is in reality one problem. . . . Not only are mental disorder and mental deficiency intimately connected medically, but, both being the fundamental causes of various social evils, there are numerous cases now sent to Mental Hospitals which, for their own sake and for that of others, could be better dealt with in institutions for mental defectives, and, indeed, would undoubtedly be so dealt with if the number of such institutions provided by local authorities were reasonably adequate. . . . In order to emphasize how great are the arrears in accommodation for mental defectives, we may point to the fact that, so far, not a single local authority has itself provided sufficient institutional accommodation to meet the needs of its mental defectives; that scarcely 18 per cent. of the authorities have provided any accommodation at all; and that, upon the lowest calculation, there are not far short of 20,000 mental defectives for whom institutional care is required, but is unobtainable."

A by-product of this shortage is that mental deficient are often sent to mental

hospitals, when they could be better dealt with in other institutions, thus maintaining the pressure on, and the shortage in, mental hospital accommodation. This situation is brought about by false ideas as to economy. False, for many reasons, but mainly because mental hospital accommodation is used for a class of case for which it is unsuitable, and because, as the Commissioners point out, "the consequences, both economic and social, of neglecting the treatment of mental deficiency are less immediately apparent, and the public have much yet to learn of the hardship to the individual and the cost to the community which results from this neglect. When it is more generally appreciated how large a proportion of Poor Law expenditure and of the cost of the Prison service is traceable to neglected care of mental defect, it will be realized that, apart from humanitarian considerations, the cost of providing this urgently-needed accommodation will be more than saved in other directions." In this it may be hoped that the contemplated changes under the Local Government Bill, 1928, making the Poor Law areas coterminous with the asylums and mental deficiency areas, with a corresponding common charge under both heads, may effect some satisfactory change in practice and administration, for who can doubt that the separation of these services in the past has led to a lack of understanding and to no small amount of competition as to which authority can best evade the necessary responsibility and consequent charges.

At page 38 the Commissioners enlarge upon this idea of economy by reference to the social consequences of this neglect. "Each year," they say, "adds to the mass of evidence already in our possession that the untrained and uncontrolled defective, left to himself in a highly organized and competitive society, is a menace to the community; in youth he causes untold misery and expense, and in middle life he becomes dependent upon others for support. If the community could be convinced that, in training and protecting the mentally defective, they are simply adjusting an old burden rather than creating a new one, they

would not grudge the necessary preliminary outlay." Then follows a list of family histories in six cases, of mentally deficient, such as eugenists are familiar with, but such as have not before figured in an official report of this character.

The Commissioners comment: "In face of our growing knowledge of such family histories, no one can dispute that mental deficiency is the fundamental cause of much pauperism, and of a great deal of petty and serious crime. It is also the fundamental cause of much inebriety. Mental deficiency is intimately allied with insanity. Further, mentally defective parents do not and cannot respond to the health and hygienic instruction which is having so great an influence towards the improvement of the physique of the population. Therefore, mentally defective parents must create centres of degeneracy and disease which welfare work can never reach."

These passages might have been written by any thoroughgoing eugenist. They are emphasized at page 46 by a section on "Marriage of defectives under Orders, and Sterilization." Under this heading the Commissioners set out matter and argument with which all eugenists are familiar. They add that they have received from a number of Local Authorities resolutions expressing the opinion that legislation should be promoted in order to make illegal these marriages, and also in order to legalize a system of voluntary sterilization, with subsequent supervision, of mentally defective persons. There follows a series of cases, set out in detail, illustrating the evil results of such marriages. Commenting upon the result of these marriages the Commissioners say that "A careful study of the information before us leads to the conclusion that the marriage of defectives has disastrous consequences to the community. . . ." Of the children born to such parents, "Many will develop criminal tendencies and, in one way or another as they reach man's estate, they must become a permanent charge on the community, who will have to support them either in prisons, hospitals, or poor law institutions."

On sterilization, the Commissioners say that it will "not obviate the need for supervision and industrial training," and that "The subject calls for careful study and investigation, and too little is yet known as to the ultimate results to enable any suggestions to be made with regard to legislative action." The extent to which the whole administrative machine is clogged by the absence of sufficient accommodation is illustrated in many ways. For example, on the subject of "ascertainment" it is pointed out that whilst the number of defectives reported during the year shows an increase, the increase is less than in the last three years. Various reasons for this are suggested, but, the Commissioners add, "We fear, however, that it is due in some cases to a feeling which has been expressed to us on more than one occasion, namely, that ascertainment of defectives is of little good until the means of providing adequately for them are forthcoming."

STATISTICS

All interested in the subject of mental disability will much regret that the recent Reports of the Board are without the elaborate statistical returns which were formerly included in the annual Reports. Whilst it is satisfactory to find an increase in research material, it needs to be pointed out that the material presented is all on the clinical side of the work. Instructive as such material is—and there needs to be much more of it—it requires to be supplemented by comparable statistical data, such as is lacking in modern reports. Thus the broader issues fail to receive attention, and clinical research is unbalanced. It becomes an analysis of the treatment of individual cases, or classes, and the wider aspects of a great problem escape attention.

The number of insane patients on January 1st, 1928, is shown as follows:

Private patients	...	14,646
Pauper patients	...	122,754
Criminal patients	...	893
Total	...	138,293

This is an increase on the previous year of 1,667, against an average increase for the last five years of 2,403.

MENTALLY DEFICIENTS

In institutions and certified houses	22,356
In approved homes	456
Under guardianship or notified ...	1,357
Total	24,169

The total cost of the upkeep of County Asylums and of the maintenance of patients during the year is given as £7,803,804, a net increase on the previous year of £218,411. Taking County and Borough Hospitals together, the cost per head per week is shown at 23s. 2d.

ENCEPHALITIS LETHARGICA

During the years 1918-1927, 644 patients were received, who on admission or subsequently were recognized as suffering from this disease or its *sequelæ*. The subsequent history of these patients is shown as follows:

Died	144
Discharged :	
Recovered	85
Relieved	77
Not improved	7
Remaining	331

To these numbers must be added a considerable number of patients whose condition is or has been such as not to justify certification. These have been received in general hospitals, in Poor Law institutions, and in many cases it has not been possible to offer treatment; there being no appropriate accommodation, or the patients refusing treatment.

The papers contributed in Part 2 of the Report on scientific research work are of much interest, even to the layman. Their value to the medical service must be very great. It would, however, be improper for a layman to comment upon them, and they must be left for personal examination by those interested. The Commissioners comment with satisfaction upon the increase in this class of work—an expression which

must be shared by all interested in this subject.

The Report concludes with a worthy tribute to Sir Frederick Willis on his retirement from the Board after forty-two years' service, of which the last seven were spent as Chairman of the Board. Those forty-two years have been marked by an immense improvement in the care and treatment of the insane, a movement that in later years has been retarded by controlling Statutes urgently in need of revision. Sir Frederick Willis may well be proud of the great part which he has played in this humanitarian movement. His interest in eugenics is known to be real and sustained, and all members of the Society will join with the Commissioners in an expression of sincere regret at his retirement.

E. J. LIDBETTER.

SLUMS AND EUGENICS

Townroe, B. S. *The Slum Problem*. London, 1928. Longmans, Green. Pp. 220. Price 6s.

WE might well devote the space available to proving the very high value of this admirable handbook, which everyone even remotely interested in the slum problem—for Mr. Townroe interprets his title in the widest sense—should obtain without delay. We must, however, confine ourselves to the eugenic aspects of the book. Lord Dawson of Penn made a fundamental eugenic point the other day, when he said that important as some other considerations are, the paramount factor is the mother. He had behind him the most important document on social well-being published since the war, *Poverty, Nutrition and Growth*, the report on Scottish conditions published by the Medical Research Council.

On every page Mr. Townroe is fair and he is honest. He never 'plays to the gallery': he does not care whether he is saying popular and acceptable things: but he never ignores real human difficulties and hardships. Eugenists cannot but be dismayed at the 'cart-before-the-horse' man-

ner in which the question is handled to-day, even by people not driven on by the cruel lash of party necessity. His house is, after all, only one of a great many things upon which a man or woman expends thought, desire, planning, time, energy, and money. The people who put it far down on the list of their choice get the worst accommodation, especially when their legislators have exerted themselves to make houses scarce and expensive. The orator's declamation, "How can you expect people to be other than dirty, drunken, idle, and debauched if you only give them hovels to live in?" is a most wicked travesty of the truth. "YOU" don't "GIVE" them houses at all, except in the rare cases where quarters go with an appointment; and in very small premises in unpleasant—even notorious—streets are to be found at this moment, by thousands, men and women, boys and girls, second to none in the whole country for refinement and nobility of character.

The eugenist must first insist upon the proper sequence of thought; but having done so, he desires to emphasize the factors which *encourage* and those which *discourage* the higher types of character.

The housing problem for eugenists centres in the question of obstacles put in the way of vigorous human beings and families either building houses for themselves or making effective their demands for houses which suit their desires and their pockets. Up to the early part of this century the great liking of the people of this country for investing their savings in bricks and mortar worked well from this point of view. People were continually either buying houses for themselves or expressing a demand for them which was readily satisfied by those like-minded investors. We cannot help thinking that this state of things worked well from the eugenist's standpoint. Then came the vogue of a totally different idea. The whole community was conceived of as a unit, whose duty it was to supply houses for the people who showed the least effective aptitude for acquiring them for themselves. It became the object of legislative and administrative activity to choose out those people